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TRUMP DEMANDS ELECTIONS BE POSTPONED AMID COVID

For the first time, US President Donald Trump on Thursday floated the idea of delaying the November 3 election | P12

DON RAILS AGAINST MAIL-IN VOTING

The president once again railed against the mail-in voting system set to be used widely in November due to Covid-19. "With Universal Mail-In Voting, 2020 will be the most INACCURATE & FRAUDULENT Election in history. Delay the Election until people can securely and safely vote???," he tweeted. As per the rules, only Congress can change the election date

ARE HIS CLAIMS ON FRAUD RIGHT?

- Experts do agree that chances of fraud are higher when votes are cast via mail than in-person at a poll booth. But, there's no evidence to suggest mail-in voting leads to widespread fraud.
- His demand comes as several polls in recent weeks have shown him trailing rival Joe Biden, even in some conservative states

6 points

HIS BIDEN'S LEAD OVER TRUMP IN LATEST POLL BY RASMUSSEN REPORTS

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KARNATAKA COVID-19 BATTLE

6,128 Test Positive on Thursday

the highest single-day spike so far

TOTAL CASES 1,18,632 | 46,694 Total Recoveries | 2,230 Total Deaths

Cases in Bengaluru Urban district increase by 2,233

12-15% of people undergoing rapid antigen tests in Tumakuru turn positive

Videography at Covid hospital in Shivamogga prohibited

Karnataka unlocks a bit more

Gyms, yoga centres can reopen from August 5, but Metro, schools, theatres will remain shut

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

FITNESS freaks can look forward to resuming their regimen again from August 5, with the State Government allowing gymnasiums and yoga institutes to reopen under the Unlock 3.0 guidelines. However, this will be subject to standard operating procedures (SOPs) to be announced by the State Health and Family Welfare ministry.

The guidelines, which will come into effect from August 1, were released on Thursday, a day after the Centre notified Unlock 3.0. As per the notification, lockdown in containment zones across the state has been extended till August 31.

Schools and educational institutes will continue to remain closed, but online classes will go on. Metro rail, cinema halls, swimming pools, amusement parks, theatres, bars, auditoriums and assembly halls will also remain closed. The dates for their reopening may be decided separately by the Centre with the necessary SOPs.

Independence Day celebrations across the state and 'At Home' functions will be allowed with social distancing and by following other health protocols like wearing of masks, while ensuring all Covid-19 safety norms. P6

With restrictions eased, streetside vendors are back in business. A blanket seller attends to a customer in Bengaluru on Thursday, which is seeing a dip in temperature | MEGHANA SASTRY

Containment zones restrictions

Lockdown in containment zones will remain imposed till August 31, only essential services allowed.

Containment zones will be demarcated by the BBMP / district authorities

WHAT THE GUIDELINES SAY

WHAT'S ALLOWED

- Yoga institutes, gyms can open from **AUGUST 5**
- Movement of passenger trains and Shramik special trains
- INDEPENDENCE DAY FUNCTIONS ALLOWED
- **Movement of Indian nationals stranded abroad**
- Domestic air travel

WHAT'S NOT ALLOWED

- Schools, colleges and coaching institutions will remain closed till **AUGUST 31**
- Cinema halls, swimming pools, amusement parks, theatres, bars, auditoriums, assembly halls and similar places
- **People aged over 65, those with co-morbidities, pregnant women, and children aged below 10 to stay home**
- Social/ political/ sports/ academic/ cultural/ religious functions and other large gatherings
- Metro Rail services

Modi snubs China's debt-trap diplomacy

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

IN a veiled attack on China's debt diplomacy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday that some nations were tricked into dependence partnerships in the guise of development partnerships, adding that India's development cooperation does not come with any conditions.

"History has taught us that in the name of development partnerships, nations were forced into dependence partnerships. It gave rise to colonial and imperial rule. It also gave rise to global power blocks," Modi said at a virtual event where he jointly inaugurated the Supreme Court building of Mauritius with Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth.

"For India, the most fundamental principle in development cooperation is respecting our partners. This sharing of development lessons is our only motivation. That is why our development cooperation does not come with any conditions," Modi said.

China's debt diplomacy involves striking favourable deals with countries that face huge debts which they cannot pay back. The prime example of such tactics is the Sri Lankan port of Hambantota, which is currently in Chinese hands as Colombo is unable to pay back its debt.

MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said the SC building in Mauritius was an example of India's ability to implement projects in various parts of the world.

Disengagement not complete, says MEA

Rejecting China's claim on LAC disengagement, India said on Thursday it is still a work in progress. "There's been some progress but the disengagement process has as yet not been completed," said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava

"The new Supreme Court building provides state-of-the-art facilities. It is a fully green building. The project has been completed on schedule and at a cost below the initial estimates," he said.

EXPRESS READ

HC sends notices to Raj speaker, BSP MLAs

Jaipur: The Rajasthan High Court on Thursday issued notices to the Speaker, secretary of the state legislative assembly and six MLAs, who contested elections on BSP tickets and then defected to Congress. The court issued notices, while hearing writ petitions filed by BSP and BJP MLA Madan Dilawar. P9

Vaccine protecting monkeys from Covid

London: A Covid-19 vaccine candidate developed by the University of Oxford in the United Kingdom elicits an immune response and reduces the viral load in monkeys exposed to SARS-CoV-2 virus, according to a study published in the journal Nature on Thursday.

NASA's Mars rover to look for signs of life

Cape Canaveral (US): The biggest, most sophisticated Mars rover ever built - a car-size vehicle bristling with cameras, microphones, drills and lasers - blasted off for the red planet on Thursday, as part of a long-range project to bring the first Martian rock samples back to Earth to be analysed for evidence of ancient life.

DIPLOMATIC ROW

Border situation with China beyond repair, says Deve Gowda

RAMU PATIL @Bengaluru

AS India and China continue to work on complete disengagement of troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) after a deadly clash in the Galwan Valley, former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda, who helmed the 1996 accord between the two countries, is sceptical of normalcy in relations being restored in the coming days.

"Now, things have gone beyond repair," Gowda told *The New Indian Express*. "Sitting here (in Bengaluru), I do not know the ground realities today, but it has become a mess," Gowda said, expressing his displeasure over the developments.

Accusing China of committing a heinous act by attacking Indian soldiers, Gowda said there are several questions regarding various decisions and what actually led to the clash in Galwan Valley. "Why did our soldiers go empty-handed, and who took that decision? They should have first sent a small team to gather intelligence. It is one of the major issues," Gowda said.

The 1996 accord between the two countries on exercising self-restraint and taking steps to avoid escalation in the situation was signed when Gowda was PM. The Centre had earlier clarified that the soldiers were not empty-handed, but had exercised restraint in the spirit of the agreement. Chinese troops violated the agreement when they attacked Indian soldiers in the Galwan Valley.

Earlier, on June 19, Gowda had suggested that it is important to institute an inquiry to establish what exactly led to the tragic events in Galwan Valley. P7

ON A RAFT AND A PRAYER

Villagers use a banana raft to move to safer places from the flooded Goalbil area in Assam's Baksa district on Thursday | PTI

SUSHANT

ACTOR'S FATHER MOVES SUPREME COURT

Sushant Singh Rajput's father, and the Bihar Government, moved the apex court by filing caveats to ensure that actress Rhea Chakraborty does not get relief of FIR transfer from Patna to Mumbai | P10

INDULGE

32 PAGES, INCLUDING 16 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Promoting students without holding exams against norms, UGC tells SC

KANU SARDA @ New Delhi

THE University Grants Commission (UGC) on Thursday told the Supreme Court that all universities and educational institutions are obligated to conduct final-year examinations by September-end as per its July 6 guidelines.

The UGC filed a 50-page affidavit on a batch of petitions challenging its July 6 directive. "It is submitted that the UGC has issued such guidelines to protect the academic future of students across the country which will be irreparably damaged if their final year/terminal examinations are not held, while also keeping in mind their health and safety," the affidavit stated, adding that the final year/terminal semester examinations are important because the "learning process is a dynamic interaction where the only way to figure out what students know is to seek evidence of their knowledge and to evaluate it".

The UGC contended that the July 6 guidelines adequately account for the evolving situation of the Covid-19 pandemic, as they provide sufficient time till the end of September to conduct the exams and give sufficient flexibility to institutions to conduct exams through online, offline or blended route.

It also added that those students who are unable to appear this year would be given a chance at a later date. The affidavit also criticised certain state governments (Maharashtra and Delhi) for cancelling the final-year exams and deciding to graduate students and confer degrees without appearing for the exams.

CHARTING COURSE

KCET results will be out by mid-August: Dy CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru

DEPUTY Chief Minister and Higher Education Minister Dr C N Ashwath Narayan on Thursday said that the results of the Karnataka Common Entrance Test (KCET), for admission to engineering colleges, will be declared by August 15. This will facilitate admissions by September, when colleges are expected to reopen, he told reporters after day one of test.

The first day of KCET, which was held after much delay and contestation amid the pandemic, saw a substantial percentage of attendees even as the state reported more than 6,000 Covid-19 cases in a single day. Of the 1,94,419 registered candidates, 75.89 per cent wrote the Biology test and 89.22 per cent attempted the Math paper. This is lower than the previous year's attendance of 79.90 per cent for Biology and 91.92 per cent for Math.

The staff at Jain College check students before their KCET papers in Bengaluru on Thursday | SHIVAKUMAR BK

The minister reasoned that this was owing to the announcement of Class 12 results before the CET, due to which ineligible students could not appear for the test.

Among the candidates were 49 students in Biology paper and 57 students in Math paper who had tested positive for Covid-19 and had written their exams across 22 districts. These students were allocated halls in Covid Care Centres, utmost care was taken by invigilators too and the room was thoroughly sanitised, said Ashwath Narayan, who had visited and spoken to a few students at the GKVK centre during their test.

He was confident of 100 per cent attendance of the 60 Covid-19-positive students in the state. Ambulances ferried them to the exam centre and back home. Although incidents of crowding outside the exam centre were reported to the minister, he brushed aside the claims and told the media that he did not witness any such incidents.

CONTINUED ON: P7